Correspondence.

THE NEW COUNTY COURTS.

SIR,—Can you or any of your readers give me a satisfactory reason, why the erection of the new County Courts in Westminster, Shoreditch, Bristol, Royston, and Liverpool, should be confided solely to the care and ability of the surveyor to the Metropolitan Police Force; and no public notice be given of their intended erection inviting competition for designs? Surely the Secretary of the Home Department in the pressure of public business has overlooked this matter. Would not the present be a good opportunity for the display of more of that article, which throughout all England partakes very much of the nature of angel visits, I mean good taste, than we can possibly extract from the designs carried out at the Southwark, Vincent-square, and other recently erected Police Courts? Surely the principle of free trade may be extended to such a case as this.

AN ENEMY TO ALL MONOPOLY.

Aug. 3rd, 1847.

Miscellanea.

IVY ON CHURCHES.—Relative to a quotation on this subject, which we lately inserted, the *Gardeners' Chronicle* says:—"Can any one inform us what learned man it was who first denounced the Ivy? That would be a curious chapter in ecclesiastical history which should tell how it came to pass that the great natural ornament of our churches was first expelled from holy places, and forbidden to guard them from decay. Is it possible that there still exists the man who thinks that ivy hastens decay? that buildings perish because it clings to their masonry and guards them from the storm? that brickwork, and stonework, and woodwork rot the more the drier they are kept? The supposition is incredible. We know that even the mud-walls of a farm-house stand the better for the ivy that mantles over them, and that the soundest part of a building is just that which the ivy occupies. We are told, indeed, that notwithstanding all which can be said to the contrary, ivy does destroy old buildings; and a very intelligent correspondent says, that he knows of 'a church which has been rendered so unsafe from the cracks in the tower, *caused* by a large mass of ivy, that it has been disused.' But we must contend, with all submission, that here is a mistake. We are not to infer that ivy causes cracks because it is associated with them. It naturally grows in neglected places, and in such situations buildings become ruinous. Rags and poverty are also associates; but it will hardly be argued that rags cause poverty. In truth, ivy is incapable of the action assigned to it. Its little roots are merely for enabling it to cling to the body which bears it, and to suck up what moisture they may find there. They cannot insinuate themselves between mortar joints, and displace masonry. On the contrary, the nutrition of the ivy is carried on by roots buried in the soil, and acting like those of other trees. We apprehend that the mistake has arisen from cracked and crumbling walls having been overgrown with ivy, which having introduced its shoots into the fissures, or perhaps formed a real root therein, if earth and other matters should have been collected, have then, by horizontal expansion, widened the rents, and so in time overthrown the masonry. We submit that the 'episcopal eye' is turned quite in a wrong direction when it frowns upon ivy; and that its severity should be directed to the churchwardens who fail to take care of their masonry. Instead of tearing away ivy, stonework should be repaired. To destroy the plant will not uphold the building. If the structure is ruinous, it will not become whole again by scraping its surface. When properly repaired, the ivy is its best friend, and we strongly suspect that, although not repaired, a ruin will last longer when covered with this plant than when left naked to the effects of a few winters."

THE TUBULAR BRIDGE.—General Pasley has published a protest against the tubular bridge, as now proposed to be executed, chiefly on grounds of objection first urged in THE BUILDER.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Tenders have been called for by advertisement for the erection of an infirmary at Watford; the completion of a row of houses in Albany-road; repairs and restoration at Normanton Church; building a barn and cart-shed with granary above near Stuntney by Ely; taking down and rebuilding a farm-house at Chignal Smealy; constructing two tanks and gas-holders at Westminster; making and building a new sewer at Kensington; and executing river-works and low-water landing place, with short railway connection with pier at Ferry-Port-on-Craig, river Tay, on the line of the Edinburgh and Northern Railway.

THE NATIONAL MONUMENT AT EDINBURGH.—A new movement has been made towards a renewal of the works of this contemplated restoration of the Partheoon on the Calton Hill of the modern Athens,—the mere laying of the foundations of which, it may be remembered, and the erection of the western portico which has so long stood, like our own monument to Nelson, a monument of more things than one, cost no less a sum than 15,000*l*. It is now proposed to cut away the church and sepulchre clauses from the Act for its erection, clauses which have long been felt to hang like a millstone round the neck of this ambitious project; and to devote the edifice at large to the purposes of a "Scottish Pantheon, or Gallery of Honour, for the reception of monumental busts and statues of great and distinguished men, whether statesmen, warriors, poets, men of literature, science, artists, &c., not limited to Scotland, or even Great Britain, but open to great men of all nations." The pediments and metopes, together with the friezes of the peristyle, are proposed to be decorated with national sculpture, and the interior with painting illustrative of Scottish and British achievements, whether in fresco, encaustic, or oil, as may be decided upon. Ere now its object was less comprehensive, though its scale was equally magnificent: for its former object was limited to "national gratitude for the successes of the British arms by sea and land in the late eventful war." It being rather *too late* now, however, to carry out such an object with any thing like a prospect of success, far less of enthusiasm, a new Act is proposed to be applied for, providing for the establishment of 5*l*. shares to the amount of 150,000*l*., instead of 25*l*. shares to the amount of 50,000*l*. only, for the purpose of bringing the whole into shape. It is probable, however, that many of the citizens of Edinburgh will now almost regret any further addition to the picturesque and majestic pillars by which their city has been so long surmounted.

'NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.'—At a formal confabulation of assaulted citizens, on the urgent subject of strengthening the fortification of their city walls, as well, no doubt, as of their imprisoned valour, a leather merchant boldly and professionally declared that 'there was nothing like leather.' We are, therefore, persuaded, that an ingenious American citizen of Allegany—not the rocky mountain, but the 'city'—must have been a leather merchant, who,—surrounded too by imprisoning walls, and assaulted by that enemy to many an ingenious handicraftsman, the criminal law,—is said to have lately found 'nothing like leather,' for not only resisting the assaults of that thief of an enemy no less than enemy of a thief—Time,—but for placing him in clockwork harness; this ingenious handicraftsman having successfully tried his crafty hand, and cheated himself, if not the law, out of the time appointed,—in the manufacture of a *leather clock*, which, to all appearance, goes as well as any ever made of wood by his kinsman, Samuel Slick, of Slickville, Esquire.

FURNACE FOR BURNING BRICKS.—J. W. Andrews, Norristown, Pennsylvania, April 4th, 1846; added to original patent, bearing date March 21st, 1843.—Claim.—"Having thus fully set forth the manner in which I construct and use my kiln for burning bricks with anthracite, or other coals, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by letters patent, is the two principal flues passing outside of the kiln—one on each side, and one centre flue, passing through the centre and under the floor of my kiln. These main flues are connected with lateral flues, or branches (as described in my original patent), necessary to conduct the wind required under each fire or into each air chamber.

SURREY COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUM.—The proposed enlargement of the Surrey county Lunatic Asylum, lately formed a subject of consideration at the Surrey Sessions, when a report by the Committee of Visiters was read, reciting that after the original plans, at the estimated expense of £35,000; had been ratified at the Quarter Sessions in June, 1846, approved, after alteration, by the secretary of state, and submitted for tender to eight of the principal builders in the metropolis, the county surveyor had instructed the several builders to tender only for a portion of the work, estimated by him at a cost of £28,238, and that after the lowest tender, Mr. Kelk's for £35,500, had been corrected, by a suggestion that certain fire-proof and other improvements and alterations estimated at a cost of £3,027 5s. 5d. should be abandoned, and by the discovery of a deficiency in the architect's estimate of £3,599, arising from the adoption of an erroneous basis for his calculations, the committee had submitted the whole plans to the consideration of another architect, Mr. Thomas Hopper, who suggested that Mr. Kelk's tender was a reasonable one, which it would be injudicious to reject, although it should be so altered as to comprise every part of the work. It was reported, therefore, that the several plans, working-drawings, and specifications, since their completion, had been submitted to Mr. Kelk, who had sent in a second tender for £36,500. The court approved of the report, which also provided for the architect's commission at 4 instead of 5 per cent., and resolved that the Committee of Works be empowered to expend in the erection and completion of the proposed enlargements, a sum not exceeding £43,000.

ANCIENT RELICS.—On the 8th instant, a stone coffin was discovered by men who were excavating for the Monmouth and Hereford line, about a quarter of a mile from Caerleon, in the road to Usk. A drawing of it has been forwarded to us, which shews that it was 6 ft. 2 in. long, 24 in. wide at the shoulders, 11 in. at the top, and 10 in. at the bottom. The sides were about 3 in. thick, and the bottom 3½. The lid was hollowed out to fit on to the coffin. The stone is oolitic, quite different from any to be found in the neighbourhood, and in good preservation. The coffin contained a skeleton and a small glass bottle with a very small neck. The local antiquaries ascribe it to a very early date.

COMPETITION.—Plans and estimates are wanted for a county lunatic asylum at Worcester, for 200 patients, with an infirmary, surgery, &c.

TENDERS

Delivered for building new vicarage house, at Pulloxhill, Beds.

Neal	£1,279
Bryant and Francis	1,178
Cobble	1,158
Welch and Burrows (accepted)	1,130
Curtis	1,018

For the Ipswich District Schools.

H. Luff	£1,025
F. Mason	978
W. Ribbans (accepted)	960
G. Ellis	850

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Parishioner of the Needle at London." is 88° 45' west.

"*Elastic Moulds.*"—A correspondent wishes to know how to make the new elastic moulds for casting figures in plaster of Paris and the ingredients of the composition.

"*J. A. P.*"—Next week. The notes alluded to will doubtless make an interesting paper.

"*W. B.*"—The remark was not ill-meant, but would have been better out.

"*R. W.*"—Weale, Holborn.

"*Hardening Stone.*"—The process for hardening stone, recently described by us, see p. 353, ante, has been applied successfully, we believe, to chalk. With the patent process advertised we are not acquainted.

"*Monitor.*"—The basis of the design in question is the Cornaro Palace: more of this hereafter.

"*P. W.*"—Several recipes for removing painting from oil cast have appeared in our pages. We will refer to them.

Received:—"J. H." (Ely), "G. R. L.," "H.," "C. R., W." (Thanks), "G. P.," "Norfolk Artisan," "J. D.," "C. R. C.," "H. F.," "A Junior." (We avoid recommendations).

Books.—"The Art-Union Journal" for August is capital number. "The Tradesmen's Book of Ornamental Designs." Part III. (Orr, Paternoster-row). "Dollman's Magazine," for August. "The Epochs of Painting Characterised." By Ralph N. Wornum (Orr, King William-street). "The Law Relative to Benefit Building Societies." By Charles Egan, Barrister at Law. (Hastings, Chery-street). "The People's Journal," No. I. of new volume.

"*Books, Prices, and Addresses.*"—We have not time to point out books or find addresses.

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